

REMARKS

In the Office Action, claims 9, 12-15, 20-23 and 25-29 were allowed and claims 1, 3-8 and 16-19 were rejected. By the present Response, claims 1 and 16 have been amended, and claim 2 has been canceled. Upon entry of the amendments, claims 1, 3-9, 12-23, and 25-29 will remain pending in the present patent application. Reconsideration and allowance of all pending claims are requested.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 3-5, 8, 16-18 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Launay et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,224,257).

In light of recent amendments to claims 1 and 16 incorporating allowable subject matter from claim 2, Applicants submit that claims 1 and 16 are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. § 102. Furthermore, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of claims 3-5, 8, and 17-18 based on their dependencies on independent claims 1 and 16 and for unique matter cited therein.

For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully request the allowance of claims 1-5, 8, and 16-18.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 6, 7 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Launay et al. in view of White et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,992,280).

As discussed above, claims 1 and 16 are in condition for allowance. Claims 6, 7 and 19 are therefore also allowable at least by virtue of their dependency from these allowable base claims.

Conclusion

In view of the remarks and amendments set forth above, Applicants respectfully request allowance of the pending claims. If the Examiner believes that a telephonic interview will help speed this application toward issuance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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